

SOLON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 7:00pm
Solon Township Hall
9191 S. Kasson St., Cedar, MI 49621

I. Call Meeting to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. Roll Call/Guest Sign-in

Present: Al Laskey, Member; Steve Morgan, Chair; Samantha Vandervlucht, Member; Meg Paxton, Member; Todd Yeomans, Vice Chair/ZBA Rep and Steve Yoder, Township Board Rep

Absent: Lisa Rossi, Member

III. Motion to Approve Minutes – November 2, 2021

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the November minutes. It was noted that under New Business, the current survey referenced was from Long Lake, not Glen Arbor. Yoder moved to approve the November 2, 2021 minutes as amended; Yeomans seconded. All present in favor, motion carried.

IV. Agenda

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the January agenda. Paxton moved to approve the January agenda as presented; Vandervlucht seconded. All present in favor, motion carried.

V. Correspondence – None.

VI. Public Comment (three minutes per person unless extended by Chair) – Brett McDowell – As a member of the public, he had heard that the PC was talking about a possible sewer system, and a possible Sewer Committee. To make this affordable, they should look at the regional sewer systems and teaming up with Maple City and Kasson Township, to get more people on the sewer system as the area expands and gets more dense. This could be a good thing for everybody. Al Laskey stated that it was the Township Board, not the PC, that is looking at the sewer system, and has hired a firm to do canvassing, so if McDowell wants to be heard on the project, he should go to the Township Board.

VII. Conflicts of Interest – None reported at this time.

VIII. Reports

Township Board Rep: Yoder summarized the discussion from the Township Board November and December meetings. At the November meeting they approved the public hearing on

January 13 for the five year Parks and Recreation Plan. In December, they approved the recycling site for another one-year term; the county stated that cameras were ready to install and will be installed in January. The County Prosecutor is ready to prosecute anyone caught for illegal dumping. They also clarified that there will be a stoplight at Cedar Road and M-72 will be a stop light, not a blinking light; re-appointed all PC members; re-confirmed Yeomans as the PC rep to the ZBA; appointed a Sewer Committee of five people. Yoder represented the township at a County Board meeting, requesting a portion of the county ARPA funds for a sewer study in Solon Township. There have been no Sewer Committee meetings scheduled yet; those will be posted online when they are scheduled.

ZBA Rep: Yeomans advised nothing to report at this time.

Zoning Administrator: Cypher reviewed the November and December reports sent to planning commission members via email prior to this meeting. He will be releasing end of year reports shortly. He also provided an update on the status of the Delmoupied issue; there was a lengthy mediation session in November. There was no resolution, so the issue will be going to court. There is a deposition set for Mr. Delmoupied in late January. Cypher received a FOIA request from the Delmoupied attorney today, and will be working with Clerk Mikowski on that. Cypher is also working on a project – Wild Juniper Nursery – that will likely come up for review in February. This project will be at the corner of Cedar Road and M-72, and will involve a nursery with greenhouse and parking in Phase 1, and a residence in Phase 2. This will be a special land use permit, and will likely have an informational meeting in February with a public hearing in March if everything is in order.

IX. Public Hearing –None

X. New Business

- A. Election of Officers – The PC briefly discussed. Yoder moved to keep the officer slate the same as in 2021, with Steve Morgan – Chair and Todd Yeomans – Vice Chair. Paxton seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
- B. Review Draft Ordinance Comments from the LCPC – Cypher stated that when he reviewed the excerpts from the meeting, the LCPC were very critical of the restrictive nature of some of the proposed ordinance changes, especially with regarding to housing developments. In addition, some projects that the county planning office deals with are trying to encourage faster review processes and faster decisions in order to encourage the construction of additional housing in the county. However, the LCPC did not seem to talk much about the waiver options and flexibility that the Solon PC has worked into the amendments. Cypher summarized other comments by the LCPC. Yoder stated that the LCPC staff report was also extremely detailed, and included notes on a number of typos, wording recommendations, and notes on consistency. The PC briefly discussed the LCPC staff report.

Yoder stated that the main focus of the LCPC discussion was on the landscape ordinance, and there was not a lot of favor for that level of regulation at the LCPC. The PC briefly discussed the LCPC discussion. The landscape ordinance is designed to prevent issues related to a lack of buffering and screening between commercial developments and residential areas and residential developments and single-family homes.

The PC discussed other items related to the ZO, including changes that were originally implemented in the first several chapters in 2014. The PC then returned to a discussion of the landscaping and buffering provisions, and whether they could more clearly state the options for waivers and flexibility. The LCPC proposed an easier standard for affordable or workforce housing; Cypher and the Solon PC disagree with having a double standard for certain developments, and again returned to the allowable waivers and flexibility that can be given to individual projects. The PC then extensively discussed if the ZO could be made more clear with regard to the allowable waivers and flexibility.

The PC then moved into a general discussion of the landscaping ordinance. Yoder said that the LCPC also commented that the proposed landscaping regarding parking lots is substantially over-complicated. The PC also briefly discussed whether the landscaping ordinance as written will be acceptable to the Township Board.

It was determined that the LCPC staff report would be distributed to the PC as a whole. In addition, Cypher would distribute an updated version of the Zoning Ordinance with basic changes as recommended by the LCPC and a version of the staff report with basic changes removed prior to the next meeting. Cypher will also reach out to Township Board members to determine their concerns with the proposed ordinance and integrate their comments into a document for discussion at the next PC meeting.

The PC continued the discussion on various portions of the proposed ordinance changes. There also seems to be some confusion in the community regarding what is allowed for agricultural buildings and what agricultural buildings are exempt from requirements. The PC briefly discussed towers, zoning, allowable waivers, density and lot size, and other issues.

XI. Unfinished business

A. Master Plan Review – Future Land Use Map – Housing Density in districts

Cypher asked where, broadly, PC members would like to see additional growth in the township for the future land use map. The PC members discussed. The best place for growth, according to the community, is in Cedar. The sewer system could assist with the growth of the village of Cedar. The PC discussed where commercial growth would be best. The general rule is to put new commercial near existing commercial. Suggestions included the intersection of Cedar Road and M-72, south of the village of Cedar, or near the gas station at Solon Road and M-72. PC members discussed the pros and cons of additional commercial in these areas, including adjoining commercial areas, road access, safety concerns, and other topics. There was a general consensus that the intersection of Cedar Road and M-72 was a likely location for additional commercial zoning, although there was no consensus regarding the size of a potential zoning change.

There was also a consensus that the village of Cedar is a good location for the expansion of commercial zoning, especially if a sewer system is installed. In addition, more commercial participants could help to make the system less expensive for all individual participants. The PC discussed the need for a sewer system and other services in the village.

XII. Other Items

A. None

- XIII. ZA/Planning Commission Comment – Yeomans asked if the cameras that the county is installing on the fire department to catch dumpers at the recycling site are actually expected to work? Yoder said they are, and the prosecutor is ready to charge people who are caught. Laskey said that if the site isn't there, it would need to be somewhere, because there needs to be a recycling site in Solon Township for the citizens. Yoder is supportive of it in the current location for the short term, but long term, a new site with less visibility and concrete pads needs to be found.

The PC briefly discussed the survey and the responses to the survey.

- XIV. Public Comment (three minutes per person unless extended by Chair) – None

- XV. Adjournment: There being no objection, Chair Morgan adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, 2022, at 7:00pm, at the Solon Township Hall.

Respectfully Submitted

Dana Boomer, Acting Recording Secretary

Date Approved: